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Application No. 10/623,576
Amendment dated November 7, 2006
After Final Office Action of September 8, 2006

Docket No.: 3722-0155P

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, and 13-17 are now present in this application.

Claims 1, 3 and 4 have been amended, and claims 2, 7-12 and 18-20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 7 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Minamino et al., U.S. Patent 6,657,929. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 8-10 and 15-20 stand rejected under 35 USC as being unpatentable over Minamino et al. in view of the Applicant's Admitted Prior Art. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 11-14 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Minamino et al. in view of Guisante et al., U.S. Patent 6,265,919. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Examiner considers claims 2-6 to contain allowable subject matter. Without conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but simply to expedite prosecution of this application, it is noted that limitations from objected-to but allowable claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claim 1. Accordingly, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims should now be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

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In the event the Examiner does not consider this application to be in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purposes of Appeal. This Amendment should overcome the current grounds of rejection and therefore simplify the issues for Appeal. Nonetheless, it should be unnecessary to proceed to Appeal because the instant application should now be in condition for allowance.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: November 7, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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